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Fifth Freedom, 1974-06-23

The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

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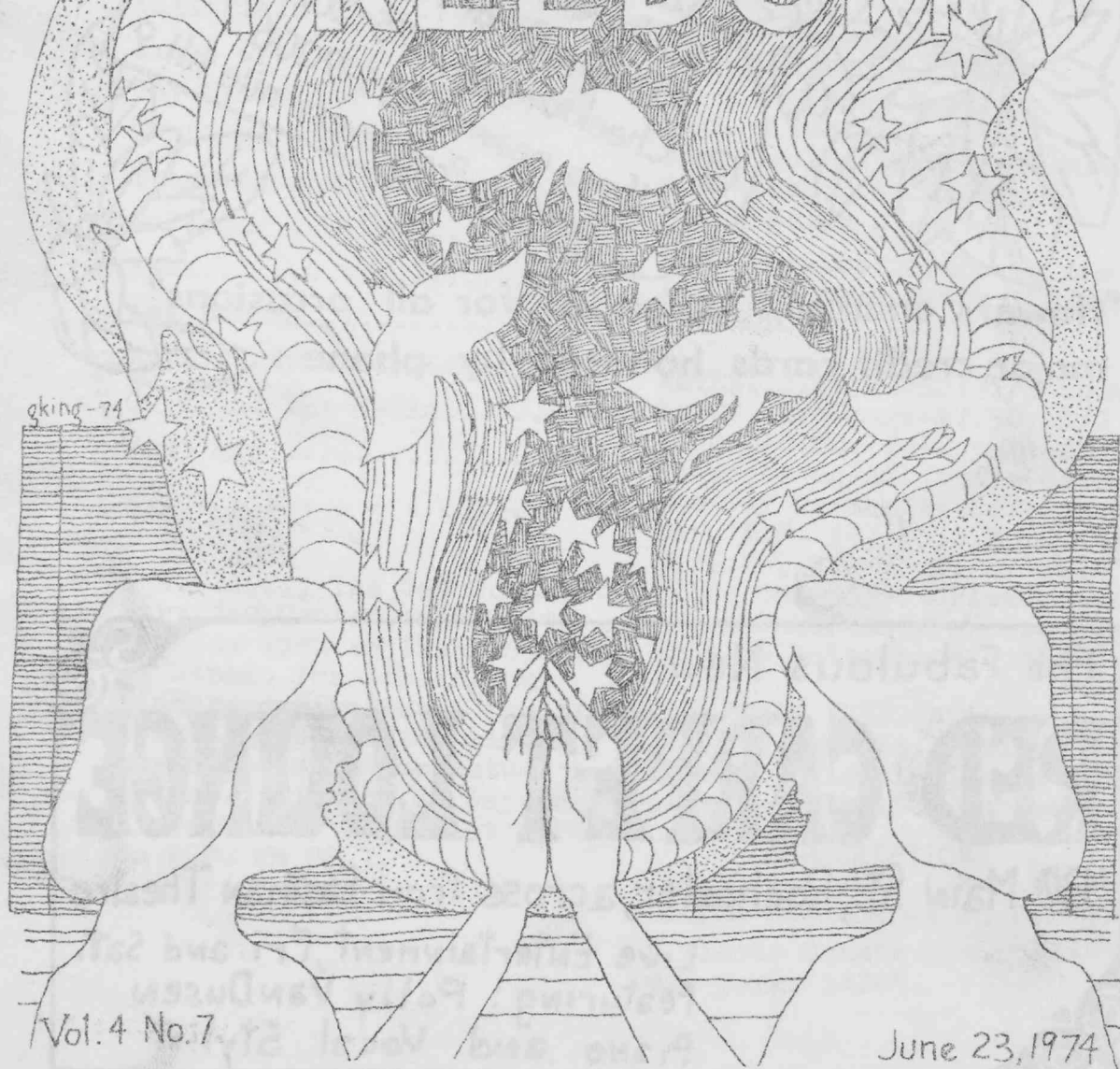
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FIFTH FREEDOM

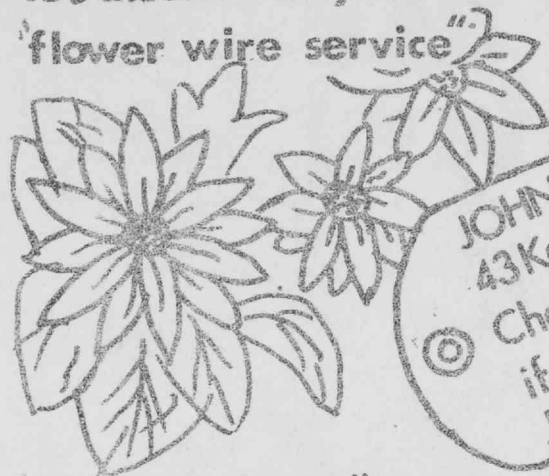


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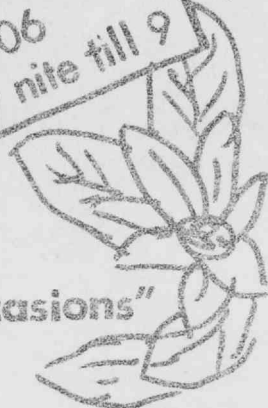
Vol. 4 No. 7

June 23, 1974

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M..N.P., The Gay Community Services Center, and Fifth Freedom wish to thank Sisters of Sappho for echoing our sincere desire for a fruitful working association with our gay sisters in our mutual endeavor. Sisters of Sappho is aired Monday nights at 11PM on WBFO FM 88.7

The FIFTH FREEDOM is published by the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier, P.O. Box 975 Ellicott Station, Buffalo, N.Y., 14205. Tel. (716) 881-5335

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 To place an ad, write or call the Gay Community Service Center, P.F. #3, 1350 Main St., Buffalo, New York, or call (716) 881-5335. Please make all checks/money orders payable to Mattachine Society.

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EDITORIAL

Mattachine Society and the Gay Community Services Center have moved, as you have probably heard. There is much reason to believe that this has been a move for the better. One of the most fortunate things associated with the move has been the degree of participation in the community which has established us in our new home. We can point to the Center with pride saying "This is ours".

It now remains for us to unite ourselves and our Center in singleness of purpose, to bring ourselves together with that feeling of community which will accomplish still great things. Half of the job is done, but to unite and encourage ourselves, to unite and demand satisfaction from that society which is so reluctant to grant us peace, this is our purpose, our adventure, and our goal.

Mark C. Goodwin

Mark C. Goodwin (Ed)

Opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier, or the Gay Community Services Center.

Space for responsible reply will be provided. Please address all correspondence to FIFTH FREEDOM #1, 1350 Main Street, P.O. Box 975, Ellicott Square Station, Buffalo, New York 14205.



Gay Community Services Center re-opened officially Saturday July 13 to the enthusiastic attendance of much of the gay community, M.S.W.F. members and staff. Immediate coverage was provided through channels 2 and 7. Channnel 4 being conspicuously absent. The afternoon progressed socially and with pleasure to all and the outgoing editor of the FIFTH FREEDOM Dan Weoppel provided us with a bottle of champagne for our inaugural ceremonies.

The first of our weekly Saturday dances followed at 9:00. and was the cause of much comment regarding it-self and the Center; Mattachine Society, a fine place. Really very relaxed and comfortable. About time that Buffalo had a good gay center. A place like this will be patronized by a lot of gays. J.F.O.E. A great step forward. We will be watching closely for Rochester and hopefully we will follow your example. W.B. I entered not knowing what to expect. I was looking for friendship and understanding. I found a beautiful hall filled with friends I could relate to and in turn were also honest and sincere. The freedom of being my firstself and secondself in relaxation. I truly enjoyed myself. D.L. The place is very nice. A lot of thought and work has been put in and it shows. I think the sound equipment was played too loud and baffles would be a good idea to cut sound bouncing off walls. K.B. A good start--the rest will come with time and money. Perhaps the biggest thing the room needs is texture to make it more gemütlich--like curtains, especially to keep out light from counseling rooms. G.H. I like your new center very much. There is a lot of potential in its size alone. I would like to see other things besides dances here, Coffee house especially--with quiet music. As for the dance, I would prefer some other kinds of music besides the standard bar tunes. If you want lots of people to come you should have more at the bar. What really struck me about the center was the sort of healthy, open, good clean fun atmosphere--markedly different from the seedy-debaucherius milieu of most gay bars. I think it is really good for the psyche to have a place for gay people that is just as unthreatening as

any other adult social club. It is like the tolerant easy going gay clubs I have seen in Denmark. The Buffalo Gay Center strikes me as an opportunity that is merely been scratched. The gallery library, etc., need donations and loan materials to make them worth a visit. But walls and floors do not make a community--the prime furnishing are people--and the important thing is how human are these people. Our reception tonight has been gracious. Good start.---In terms of space, it is more than adequate--much nicer atmosphere and appearance than G.A.A. Firehouse in N.Y.C.---Hope location works out in terms of safety, but from the size of crowd at dance it should prove no immediate problem. Best of luck. P.G. I like it very much. Prefer bars still because of more liquor selections. Fantastic

NEEDLESS TO SAY THERE IS much room for improvement and as our finances improve there will no doubt be much done, but we are off to a good start, and with the support of the community we shall go far.



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On Sunday, June 15th at 8PM, in our new Community Center, Buffalo's 4th annual Gay Pride Week got under way with a workshop on "Gay Male Chauvinism." What is it, you may ask? Essentially speaking, the gay movement has been dominated by gay males and gay male issues, leading to treatment of lesbians and their issues as an afterthought. What's happened is that many lesbians have left the gay movement and are finding more rapport with the women's lib movement.

The biggest question in the movement of late has been "why don't the women work with us?" Sunday night's workshop was a good starting point for gay men to start facing up to the problems involved.

Our guest speaker, Bert Hansen, got the ball rolling with a number of cogent suggestions. Bert, who is active in the National Gay Task Force, has faced the issue within the Task Force and the N.Y. City gay movement. He gave our workshop a strong sense of direction and managed to help us at least start thinking about the myriad problems involved.

As a nexus to gay males dealing with what is essentially their problem, he made it clear that they must face the fact that lesbians do feel a need for separatism in order to sort out their own particular problems. We must realize that several 'gay' issues are in actuality gay 'male' issues - police entrapment, tearoom sex, v.d. epidemics. Too often the issues we choose are predominantly male issues. What do we know about lesbian issues and how do we attempt to deal with them, if at all? Lesbians do have unique problems apart from those that gay males have and if the gay movement is to ever relate to gay women as well as gay men, we must realize that fact.

Several steps were suggested that gay males can take to improve rapport with their gay sisters and work for that point in time when lesbians can feel a rapport with the gay movement. We can begin by making a conscious effort to adopt a new set of semantics - refer to a chairperson instead of a chairMAN, make the distinction of gay males and lesbians instead of just gays, and repress those too often derisively used feminine pronouns for gay males (such as, 'she', 'her', or 'that woman') as a put down. Women are not inferior, they are not 2nd or 3rd class citizens - so why use female-associated pronouns as forms of derision or put-downs?

In public forums lesbians should always appear as the natural concomitant to the gay movement they are, in order to make the public aware that there are problems unique to lesbians and that gays' problems are not just gay male problems. Gay males should make every effort

(continued)

Gay Males and Lesbians...cont.

to acquaint themselves with lesbian problems and issues by reading lesbian-oriented books and periodicals and making a concerted effort to interact with their gay sisters and listen rather than dominate.

We hope Sunday night's workshop was the starting point we need for improving relations with our lesbian sisters. We must come to a realization that the gay movement must stop co-opting lesbian needs and issues with issues that are mostly male-oriented. We must seek a coalition with our lesbian sisters based on mutual understanding and cooperation, and hope that they will give us the opportunity to interact with them and learn. It's a climate of togetherness that's long overdue.



Many of us at the Center last Monday had some of our questions concerning T-V's and T-S's finally answered during a pannel discussion organized by Peggy Ames and Chaired by Jim Haynes. With them on the pannel were Randy and Linda Vosburgh (Randy is a female to male TS, or FTS, and Linda is his wife and charming companion), Dr. Elizabeth McCauly (a physician specializing in Psychoendocrinology), Karl Alexander Rahalsky (a post operative FTS, married and comfortably integrated into society as a man), and Diana (a privately practicing trans-vestite TV who came to share her feelings and understandings with us).

After brief presentations by each of the pannel members in turn we in the audience divided among Peggy and Randy, Linda Elizabeth and Karl, and Diana, to discuss in small groups their various areas of specialty. Our thorough exploration of the subject concluded with an extended question and answer period, running into considerable over-time.

FACTS

TS's do not demonstrate any psychologically or glandularly consistent cause.

Gender re-assignment is only the second aim of TS operations. The primary aim, from both the medical and personal points of view, is the effective integration of a personality with a defined sexual orientation.



There are three steps to the TS procedure: psychological, hormonal, & surgical. The Psychological process begins as a 3-4 month screening and continues through and beyond surgery. The hormonal treatment corrects secondary sex characteristics. Surgery corrects primary sex characteristics.

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CALENDAR

GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER HOURS 2PM-10PM Mon.-Fri.
 1350 Main Street 2nd Floor
 (Over Motor Tire Co.) 1PM-3AM Saturday

(GCSG Sponsors regular dances every Sat. 9-3
 Admission \$1.00 beer served) 1PM-6PM Sun

Sat. 6/20 9:00-3:00 GAY PRIDE WEEK DANCE

Mon. 6/22 8:00 PM Gay Liberation Front Meeting, U.B.
 Norton Union, Room 232.

11:00 PM "Sisters of Sappho" Lesbian Radio
 Program, WBFO FM 88.7

Tues. 6/25 8:00 PM Board Meeting

7:00 PM Fifth Freedom Staff Meeting

Thurs. 6/27 Counseling Staff Meeting 7:30 PM

Sat. 6/29 Christopher St. March, New York City
 9:00 Regular Saturday Night Dance

Mon. 7/1 6:00 PM Fifth Freedom Deadline

8:00 PM Gay Liberation Front Meeting, U.B.
 Norton Union, Room 232.

11:00 PM "Sisters of Sappho" Lesbian Radio
 Program, WBFO FM 88.7

Tues. 7/2 8:00 PM Staff Meeting

Wed. 7/3 9:30 PM Stonewall Nation Radio Program

Thurs. 7/4 Independence Day, Center Closed

Sat. 7/6 9:00-3:00 Regular Saturday Night Dance

Sun. 7/7 8:00 General Meeting

Both TS & TV's tend to dislike intensely their own sexual selves from the biological viewpoint and seek to alter it in some way.

Both derive comfort and fulfillment from their chose roles.

CRITICISM OF the research into TS medical practice was leveled on several grounds. Most of the reasearch currently in progress is taking place in prisons or on TS candidates, who have to pay for this research themselves, in more ways than one. The motives of the medical and social establishment in conducting this research are questioned by some. They cite: the profit motive, a desire to help returning war vetrans, meer curiosity, a desire to engineer the behavior of certain portions of the population, and others. It remains a fact, however, that some people are being helped to live full and satisfying lives, and that if a demand did not exist this research would not be carried on.

NEWS

ARSON IS SUSPECTED as the Shadows burns. A man was seen running from the scene and the smell of gas hung in the air as fire destroyed the Shadows early Sunday morning. Damage to the building and Contents ran to \$107,000 and the owners reportedly have no intention to rebuild. A key found broken in the lock increases speculation on the possible criminal.

PUBLIC RELATIONS IMPROVE as chanel 2 and 7 cover the new Center's opening at 1350 Main St. As the community comes more and more to know of our existance we continue to serve in many ways, and now the media are taking note. For the second time this week Channel 7 has moved in with their support, this time highlighting discrimination in the community

ASK LAMBDA

Dear λ

I've just been out for a little while and I don't think my friends that I've known for a while know that I'm gay. I don't know how to tell them, or even if I should. What should I do? T.R.

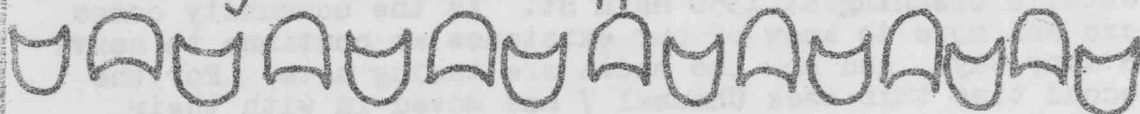
Dear T.R.

Tell them or don't, whatever seems best to you for your relationship. You may be able to judge the reactions of most of your good friends through your acquaintance. If your friends know you particularly well, you may just confirm what they already suspect. And remember, some of your friends love you for who you are, not what you are.

Ask Lambda is a regular feature of Fifth Freedom. All questions should be addressed to Ask Lambda, Fifth Freedom #2 Box 975, Ellicott Square Station, Bflo., New York. 14205

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It all began when I was twelve years of age. I found for some strange reason that I felt drawn to those of the same sex as I. I realized that I was different from the others around me but I really could not put the puzzle together. So for about two years I went around with a completely mixed up mind. Then at the age of fourteen came my very first homosexual relationship. It was in the basement with my (male) cousins. Strangely enough I found that I really enjoyed this little "adventure" and found that I craved it more and more as I got older. Finally I reached the age of 18 and finally got my first taste of Gay Bars & Gay life. At last I found myself and was happy. However I found myself only temporarily. By this I mean, I found myself to be a very feminine boy. Then came the second "adventure", cross-dressing and enjoying it immensely I felt the desire to do this more often, but could only do it privately. This is known as being a transvestite. I spent part time as a woman-part time as a man, but this did not satisfy me. It became quite hectic at times. So I sat down with myself and said "what do you really want to be?" After a long time of soul searching I came up with the answer to my question. I want to be a woman! So I went from Frank the Transvestite to Dusty the transsexual. Now I will start to tell you how I now feel living 24 hours a day as a woman. I feel very happy and content living this way. I feel, I am a woman, and must be me. I really don't have a secret life to live, my friends, (Gay&Straight), family and peers know of this and accept it well, however it was quite a blow to some people, mostly family. But they are now beginning to realize what I want to be-that I make a beautiful girl, and I do pass well. I am now under the care of doctors at the Psychoendocrinology clinic, who will help me along this rough and trying road. I enjoy my new life style and do not intend to give it up regardless of what some closed minded people feel I should do. Most of the gays accept me as I am. Others say then don't like "Drag Queens". I would like to clear up that term, I am not a drag queen! I am a woman and if people can't accept this that's their problem, not mine. What I am going through not only costs money but it takes courage. I have that courage and I intend to keep it.

IS THE MEDIA COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET??

Seeing ourselves reflected in a positive way in the mass media has been one of our aims for a long time. As part of our Gay Pride Week '74, a "Gays and the Media" symposium was conducted on Wed. evening, June 19th. The purpose of the forum was to ferret out the problems we face with the media and to develop some insight in dealing with the media in the future. In order to promote a constructive exchange of ideas and problems, representatives of all major media in the area were invited to participate.

Judy Wright, co-moderator of the panel, talked about the problems lesbians face with the media. Judy centered her remarks around the sexism in the media regarding women, the oft-appearing 'disclaimers' involving lesbianism in areas of endeavor involving women, and the non-existent coverage of lesbianism as though it doesn't exist. Don Michaels presented a number of problems that gay people have faced with the media. He cited several negative as well as positive instances of media coverage in the past and called for improvement in coverage of gay events as well as in the attitudes and awareness of media people concerning gays.

The media was called upon to reject the apparent underlying assumptions that have limited media responses in the past. A call to move from "curiosity-level" coverage to a more matter-of-fact level was made. Cited as inherent in the "curiosity-level" approach were several invalid assumptions: 1) that the media audience is unaffected by gay issues; 2) that gayness is a novelty or a chic phenomenon, rather than a viable form of sexuality; and, 3) that the gay movement is a fringe element movement.

There was an active interchange of ideas and opinions among the audience and the media representatives participating on the panel. The media representatives were of a general feeling that much of the problem lies in the approach that gays have used toward the media, citing a certain amount of naivete among gays as to how the media functions as well as a lack of persistence by gays in trying to make the media respond. There was a healthy interchange of ideas and suggestions which may well serve to better our relations with the area media in the future.

One of the highlights of the evening was a statement of policy read by Niagara Gazette newspaper representative Gen Hammond. The following statement drew a sustained round of applause from the crowd:

"We must recognize that homosexuality is a lifestyle whether society likes it or not, whether accepted institutions and accepted formats of

MEDIA...cont.

15

news play are ready for it, it is something that can no longer be sublimated or swept under the journalistic rug. We are not going to cover it as a separate news beat nor are we going to seek out gay stories, nor sensationalize gays. But we certainly will recognize them as a group which has a point of view that only they know best and we should address ourselves to their problems and suggestions of coverage more forthrightly than in the past. Many times, both the electronic and print media has fallen into the trap of writing about gays only in the light of comparing them to other segments of society and if I fathom their recent proliferation of coverage and from what they're saying, gay people are tired of being compared. Newspaper policy is a nebulous thing and usually boils down to getting the paper out everyday which is a hustling difficult job. The only fulfillment we as journalists get is that sometimes we do something right. It's only recently that gays came out of the closet. Now you have to give newspapers a chance to come out of the closet."

The following media representatives participated in the "Gays and the Media" symposium: James Martin, Humanist magazine; Jim McLaughlin & Bob Harper of WKEM radio; Gen Hammond, Niagara Gazette; Richard Malawista, WRFQ radio; John Kotok, Buffalo New Times; Joe Lentini, WGR-TV; and Sheila Murphy, WGR Radio.

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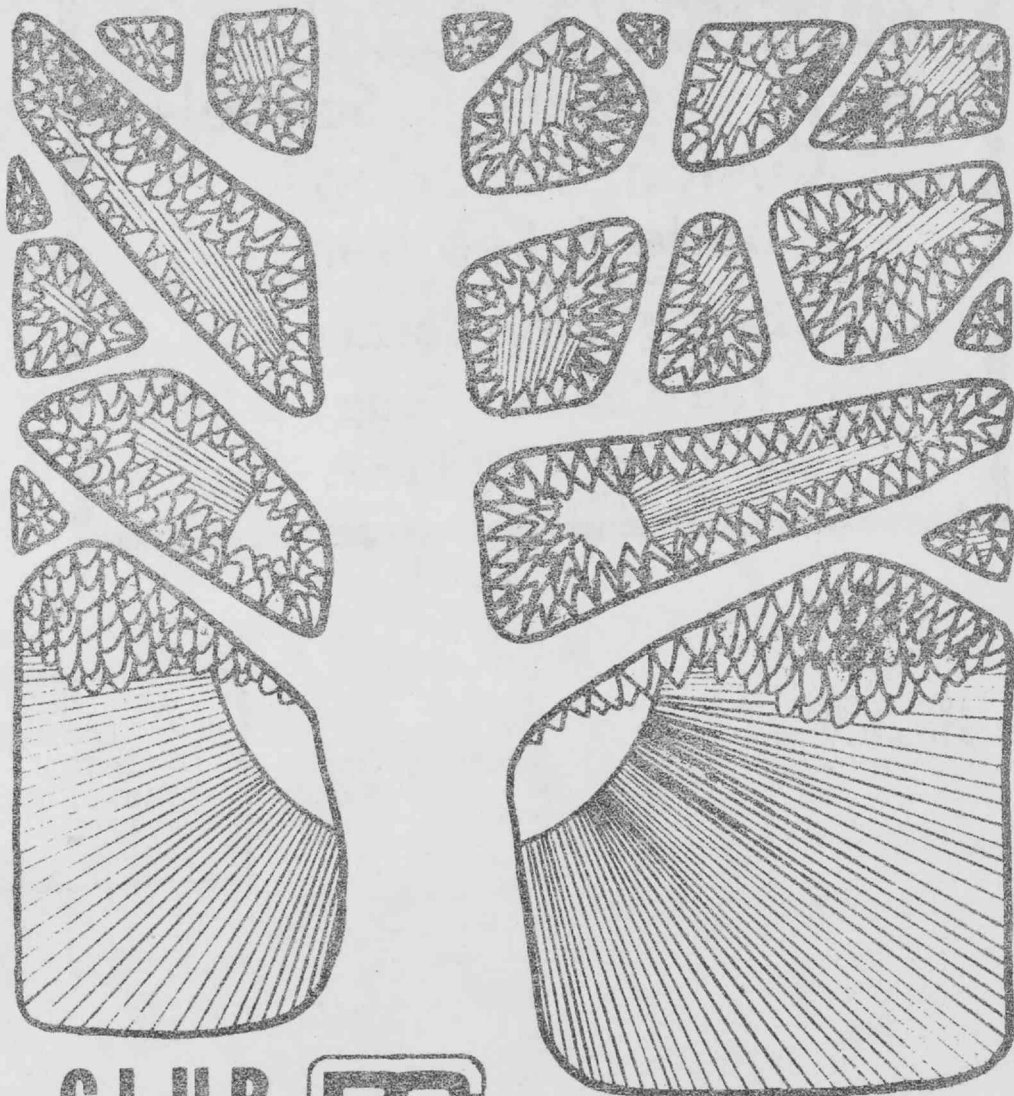
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